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— U.Va. Media Relations

College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Kamel, Dean
Interior Dean
Nancy G. Changas
Associate Dean for Management and Budget
Parker RAWL
Associate Dean for the Schools and Research
Richard H. Rediker
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Academic Programs
Paul Kligman
Interim Associate Dean of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Kaye Hix
Associate Dean for Graduate Programs
Allan Trudel
Interim Associate Director of Development

Dear Emeritus Trustees

As I gaze out the window wishing for a sustained spring (and getting April showers with a wintry mix instead), I remember fondly all those warm days on Grounds, sitting on one of the many garden benches, surrounded by all the spectacular floras that make the University one of the most enchanting places to be.

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I am also pleased to advise you that this newsletter contains a report on the College Foundation Mentoring program begun by my predecessor, Don Laing. Don’s program connects trustees with students and is a great example of how all of us can stay involved with the College at its core. This program represents a wonderful way to make a difference to a College student on a personal level and is on its way to becoming a big success.

I know that I have enjoyed getting to know my mentee over the last few months. After last fall’s Emeritus Society Weekend, I wrote asking you to support the Arts & Sciences Annual Fund. I am pleased to report that we had an encouraging response from nearly a third of emeritus trustees. However, the Annual Fund is still over $1 million short of the $4.5 million target. Our goal is 100 percent Emeritus Society participation — I hope those of you who have been waiting will make your gift before June 30 and help our Annual Fund achieve its goal for FY 2007.

Emeritus trustees have shown that we can be great assets to as well as valuable ambassadors for the College. I encourage each and every one of you to continue to support and give back in any way you can.

On a final note, I hope to see as many of you as possible at this fall’s Emeritus Society Weekend in Charlottesville on Friday and Saturday, September 5 and 6. Reservation details are in this newsletter. We have a wonderful weekend to look forward to so please plan to attend.

Best regards,

Juliana Schulte O’Reilly
Trustee, Chair of the Emeritus Society
Media Studies Reaches Department Status

The Media Studies Program officially became a department last summer, beginning the process of broadening its resources and course offerings to better meet students’ needs.

Media Studies began at the University in 2000 as an interdisciplinary major focusing on the media and effects of mass media, particularly in contemporary society. The major is open to undergraduates by application only, though a minor was created recently to accommodate more students.

One important result of the change to department status is that Media Studies will now be able to hire its own faculty, instead of being restricted to hiring faculty with joint appointment in a department.

Andrea Press, chair of media studies, said the department is still waiting to hear how many new faculty members it will be able to hire.

“There are a lot of areas in Media Studies that, because we’re so small right now, we don’t cover, and so we’d like to hire several new professors to cover those areas,” she says. Some of the areas not covered include global media and globalization, new media technology and media policy. The new department has already hired one new faculty member who will aid the department’s attempt to expand course offerings.

Siva Vaidhyanathan, a professor from New York University, will teach copyright law and new technology and copyright issues as an associate professor of media studies and law at the University.

Vaidhyanathan is well known for his book “Copyrights and Copywrongs” (New York University Press, 2001), and the University has worked to attract him to the department for over a year.

Future developments for the department include an undergraduate minor in film studies, in response to the large student interest in film. Press said the department is also hoping to create a graduate program in media studies.

Media Studies Program Begins to Bloom

The South Lawn Project will soon give the College its most high profile bridge, connecting the past and the future. Meanwhile, though they can’t be seen, there are equally important bridges being built throughout the University community every day thanks to a brand new program connecting students with some of the school’s most treasured resources.

The College Foundation Mentoring Program, launched in January, represents the evolution of a series of efforts designed to re-engage members of the Foundation Board and Emeritus Society with the University and, particularly, its students. The program is the brainchild of Don Laing, whose years of service to the school included acting as chair of the Emeritus Society.

“Here you had this group of 90 or so people who had clearly demonstrated in the past through their involvement with the College personally and financially that this was an important thing for them,” Laing said. “For me, it became about finding ways to re-engage these people, who so often would drop off boards and just disappear. When this happens the institution loses a fabulous resource and board members lose the satisfaction of being engaged which is something that means a lot to them.”

Just how much it means was proven when the Foundation’s initial call for mentoring volunteers yielded 25 positive responses. Among the first volunteers was E. Charles Laing believes the key to the program’s success depends on successful matches. He carefully reviews each application, tries to meet each student in person, and talks with a wide range of U.Va. academic and admission deans, professors, advisors and coaches who know the student best before he contacts potential mentors.

“The matching process,” he said, “is mostly art as opposed to science, and great matches depend on thinking about a broad range of mutual interests, experiences, backgrounds and personalities that can only be evaluated by knowing each mentor and student.”

Mentors are provided with a number of resources to facilitate the relationship, including sample questions and conversation prompts available on the program’s website. The nature of the interactions they design with their assigned student is completely up to the mentors, who often begin with e-mail exchanges and then proceed to online correspondence, and, whenever possible, face-to-face meetings.

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For program participant Lynn Howard (Psychology ’09), the program has been all about perspective. “I wanted another person’s perspective on how they made their major at the University apply toward their career.” With this in mind, Laing paired her with trustee Mary Watson, who started with a religious studies major and went on to become one of the most successful career in financial planning. Others in her life have expressed strong opinions on what she should do, but Watson maintains a neutral approach to Howard’s dreams and plans, which Howard appreciates. “It is so nice to have a third party who is not affiliated with you, who is not your parents, and who has not watched you grow up and come to the University. It is great for them to be able to share how they found their passion and then went on their journeys.”

One thing that is abundantly clear when talking to those on both sides of the mentoring relationship is that the benefits go both ways. “This is a busy group of folks,” Laing said. “We’re not doing this because we are looking for something else to do. We are doing it because one of the most gratifying things in life is giving. It is so rewarding when you see how little it takes to really help a young person out.”

Relationships won’t necessarily end with graduation, Laing said. “You have built this personal relationship, and the students appreciate the commitment we’ve made to them. Plus, it’s great to think that something I said accounted for that person being happy or well adjusted or getting a great job or doing something they really wanted to do.”

For more information on the College Foundation Mentoring Program, visit http://artsandsciences.virginia.edu/foundation/mentor.

Dear Friends

Andrea Press came to U.Va. in 2006 to shepherd the Media Studies Program to departmental status and to begin its graduate program.

Emertius Society Weekend

Please save the date on your calendar for the Emeritus Society Weekend in Charlottesville on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 5 and 6. Blocks of rooms have been reserved at Inn’s Lawn Inn (800) 459-1988 and Sponors’ Hall (434) 245-5000. Please refer to the group reservation for Arts & Sciences Emeritus Meeting when booking reservations.
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From the College Foundation Mentoring Program to your support of our teaching and research, emeritus trustees enhance the reputation of the College nationally and increase the College’s visibility on Grounds. Your actions, although sometimes out of the limelight, make a real difference to the College community, and for this we are truly grateful.

Sincerely yours,
Karen E. Ryan
Interim Dean of Arts & Sciences
Professor of Russian

Dear Friends

As I write, the swiftly rising walls of Ruffin Hall — our new building for Studio Art on one side of Grounds — and the new steel skeleton of the South Lawn Project on the other, are dramatically improving the College’s horizon. And scattered throughout countless building in between, you’ll find our students and faculty are engaged in the teaching, learning and research that changes lives. This is the College at its best, strong as ever, thanks, in large measure, to so many of you.

Private support makes up roughly 12 percent of the College’s budget — without such gifts and the income from donor endowments, our funds for operating the College would have run out a month before the end of the semester, forcing us to offer fewer of the things that make the College experience so outstanding. Although we are, of course, a public institution that prizes its public mandate, the reality is that the College simply cannot maintain its status without the support of its alumni and friends.

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Chair, Emeritus Society